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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
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COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT Food Production/German Army Research Centers

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1. During the German occupation of the Ukraine, the problem of food production, food supplies and supplies of seed for planting was very serious. The German army set up an organization called the "Research Center" which was to restore the research institutions and research work, collect plant scientists who remained in the occupied territory, and mobilize them for the establishing of food production. The best German plant scientists were at the head of this organization and many other German professors worked in different departments of the Research Center which were set up for certain areas in the occupied country. Some of the well-known German plant scientists working with these Centers were Professor Roemer, University of Halle; Professor Rudolf, Muncheberg Kaiser Wilhelm Institute; Professor Walter, University of Poznan; Professor Sommer, University of Stuttgart; and Professor Isenbeck, University of Halle. Botanists, geneticists, plant breeders and zoologists worked together. The zoologists helped in restoring the production of animals and fish. Soviet plant scientists and zoologists also worked with the group.
2. No seed for planting was available in many areas and some of the seed which remained on experiment stations and on seed growing farms often had been mixed together. In many cases, hungry people stole the seed for food. At this time it was important to:
 - (a) Find out where the available seed for planting remained and store it in a safe place;

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(b) Recognize different varieties by analyzing seed mixtures and by planting different samples and selecting plants to restore the varieties. Winter and spring wheat were often mixed together in common piles and it was impossible to use such grain for planting without previous work. Also, seed of oil plants and cabbage were often mixed.

(c) Some seed was shipped to the USSR from other countries and it was necessary to find ecological areas where it could be planted as a substitute for the lost Russian varieties. It was also important to learn which foreign varieties could be used in different ecological areas.

(d) Samples of medical plants necessary for the production of drugs, rubber plants, and some oil plants important for war purposes, were studied and propagated before they could be planted on a large scale.

3. Besides these problems on which many botanists worked together with geneticists and plant breeders, it was necessary to re-establish maps showing (1) distribution of ecological areas in the country; (2) distribution of crops in different areas; and (3) distribution of varieties of every crop.
4. The Research Center was a very useful organization which helped very much to restore agriculture and food supplies in the destroyed country. It saved research institutions and research work in the occupied territory and also saved scientists and gave them the possibility to use their training. The work of the Research Center was very important for the occupation army too.
5. The Research Center headquarters was in Berlin. The staff of the organization was set up in the German army before World War II started and the Center developed and enlarged during the war when many German scientists at the age of 40 and over were called into the army to use their scientific training. I believe many hundreds of people worked in the organization and they had departments in Poland and in Bulgaria. The Center belonged to the army because a civil organization could have no authority and no possibility to work in countries in the hands of the occupation army and would be unable to obtain supplies. All members of the Research Center wore a uniform. Some soldiers worked in the organization to help them obtain trucks, gasoline, seed, and to help guard the supplies.

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